

Introduction

ABOUT THIS MANUAL

The *Accountability Manual* is a technical resource that explains the accountability system used by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to evaluate the performance of public school districts and campuses. This *Manual* details the accountability system for 2004, including ratings, acknowledgments, responsibilities, safeguards and incentives, and special issues. All information necessary to compute 2004 ratings and acknowledgments for districts and campuses is included.

The organization and format of this edition of the *Accountability Manual* differ from *Manuals* published in the past. Most notably the sections of the *Manual* adopted by reference as Commissioner of Education administrative rule have been consolidated and published as a separate appendix. The process to adopt *Appendix A* by reference will be initiated as soon as this document is published so that the updated rule will be in effect by the ratings release date.

SYSTEM HISTORY

In 1993, the Texas Legislature enacted statutes that mandated the creation of the Texas public school accountability system to rate school districts and evaluate campuses. A viable and effective accountability system could be developed in Texas because the state already had the necessary supporting infrastructure in place: a pre-existing student-level data-collection system; a state-mandated curriculum; and a statewide assessment tied to the curriculum.

In developing the accountability system, TEA staff invited the assistance and advice of educators, school board members, business and community representatives, professional organizations, and legislative representatives from across the state. All collaborated on the system's design. Every year these advisory bodies assisted in modifying the system, improving the indicators, raising standards, or making other necessary adjustments. This system remained in place through the 2001-02 school year. The ratings issued in 2002 were the last under that system.

Following a statewide curriculum update in 1997, the process began to develop a new assessment, the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS). This assessment includes more subjects and grades, and is more difficult than the previous statewide assessment. With such fundamental changes, the accountability system also needed to be redesigned. As soon as results from the 2003 TAKS were available and analyzed, development of the new accountability system began in earnest.

Coincidentally, 2003 was the first year of implementation of new federal legislation related to accountability, the *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001 (NCLB). Provisions of this statute required that Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) status be assigned to all districts and campuses for the first time in the summer of 2003. The alignment with AYP was another element considered in developing the state accountability system for 2004.

EDUCATOR INPUT

While it is the role of the Commissioner of Education to establish criteria and set standards, during the past year, the commissioner relied extensively on the detailed review, study, and advice of educators and many others. The result is a system that will challenge our schools to prepare all students for the 21st century. With 2004, the system begins with an assessment

program more rigorous than ever and sets forth an accountability plan to raise the standards each year for years to come.

SYSTEM PHILOSOPHY

Over the years TEA has worked closely with public school personnel and others to develop an integrated accountability system. The 2004 system is based upon the same principles that guided the development and evolution of the previous system. These principles are:

- **STUDENT PERFORMANCE**
The system is first and foremost designed to improve student performance;
- **RECOGNITION OF DIVERSITY**
The system is fair and recognizes diversity among campuses and students;
- **SYSTEM STABILITY**
The system is stable and provides a realistic, practical timeline for measurement, data collection, planning, staff development, and reporting;
- **STATUTORY COMPLIANCE**
The system is designed to comply with statutory requirements;
- **APPROPRIATE CONSEQUENCES**
The system sets reasonable standards for adequacy, identifies and publicly recognizes high levels of performance and performance improvement, and identifies campuses with inadequate performance and provides assistance;
- **LOCAL PROGRAM FLEXIBILITY**
The system allows for flexibility in the design of programs to meet the individual needs of students;
- **LOCAL RESPONSIBILITY**
The system relies on local school districts to develop and implement local accountability systems that complement the state system; and
- **PUBLIC'S RIGHT TO KNOW**
The system supports the public's right to know levels of student performance in each school district and on each campus.

COMPARISON OF 2002 AND 2004

Many fundamental features of the 2004 accountability system parallel the previous system. Though there are similarities between the new and former systems, ratings between the two cannot be compared. The following table illustrates similarities and differences.

Table 1: Comparison of 2002 and 2004

Component	2002	2004
Standard Rating Labels (Section III)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Exemplary</i> (district/campus) • <i>Recognized</i> (district/campus) • <i>Academically Acceptable</i> (district) • <i>Academically Unacceptable</i> (district) • <i>Acceptable</i> (campus) • <i>Low Performing</i> (campus) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Exemplary</i> • <i>Recognized</i> • <i>Academically Acceptable</i> • <i>Academically Unacceptable</i>

Component	2002	2004
Evaluation of Assessment Subjects (<i>Section I</i>)	All TAAS subjects tested except Science	All TAKS subjects tested
Evaluation of Student Groups (<i>Section I</i>)	White, Hispanic, African American, Economically Disadvantaged, and All Students	White, Hispanic, African American, Economically Disadvantaged, and All Students
Evaluation of grades tested (<i>Section I</i>)	Summed across all grades tested (grades 3 – 8 & 10)	Summed across all grades tested (grades 3 – 11)
Base Indicators for Determining Rating (<i>Section I</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TAAS % Passing • Annual Dropout Rate (grades 7-12) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TAKS % Met Standard • SDAA % Met ARD Expectations • Completion Rate (grades 9-12) • Annual Dropout Rate (grades 7-8 only)
Number of Performance Measures Used (<i>Section I</i>)	The larger and more diverse the campus or district, the more measures apply — up to 21	The larger and more diverse the campus or district, the more measures apply — up to 36
Improvement Feature (<i>Section II</i>)	No improvement feature	Higher rating possible by using Required Improvement
Exceptions (<i>Section II</i>)	No exceptions feature	<i>Academically Acceptable</i> rating possible by using exceptions
Accountability Subset (<i>Section I</i>)	Students who were mobile after the October PEIMS “as of” date and before the last TAAS administration were taken out of the district and campus subset if they moved to another district	Students who are mobile after the October PEIMS “as of” date and before the last TAKS administration are taken out of the subset for a district if they move to another district; students are taken out of the campus subset if they move to another campus (whether it is in the same district or not)
Minimum Size Criteria for All Students (<i>Section I</i>)	All Students results were always evaluated, regardless of size	All Students results are always evaluated, regardless of size
Special Analysis (<i>Section VI</i>)	Used for determining rating for very small campuses and districts	Used for determining rating for very small campuses and districts
Minimum Size Criteria for Student Groups (TAAS and TAKS) (<i>Section I</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If fewer than 30 test takers, they were not evaluated separately • If 30 to 49, they were evaluated if they comprised at least 10.0% of all test takers • If 50 or more, they were evaluated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If fewer than 30 test takers, they are not evaluated separately • If 30 to 49, they are evaluated if they comprise at least 10% of all test takers • If 50 or more, they are evaluated
Pairing (<i>Section VI</i>)	Pairing of campuses was used for schools without TAAS data	Pairing of regular campuses is used for schools without TAKS data
Alternative Education Campuses (<i>Section VI</i>)	Rated according to the alternative education accountability procedures	Receive a rating of <i>Not Rated: Alternative Education</i> (these campuses will be rated beginning in 2005 according to new alternative education accountability procedures)

Component	2002	2004
Charters (Section VI)	Charter operators (here referred to simply as <i>charters</i>) were not rated and were not eligible for Gold Performance Acknowledgment (GPA). Only charter campuses were rated and eligible for GPA.	Charters are rated, as are their campuses. Both are eligible for GPA. Throughout this document the expression “districts and campuses” includes charters and charter campuses unless specifically noted otherwise.
New Campuses (Section VI)	New charter campuses (operating under a new charter) were not rated	If they do not meet at least <i>Academically Acceptable</i> criteria, new charters and new campuses (regular or charter) are labeled <i>Not Rated: Other</i>
Indicators for Determining Gold Performance Acknowledgment (Section IV)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced Course Completion • AP/IB Results • Attendance Rate • Comparable Improvement • Algebra End-of-Course Examination • Recommended High School Program • SAT/ACT Results • TAAS/TASP Equivalency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced Course Completion • AP/IB Results • Attendance Rate • Commended Performance: Reading/ELA • Commended Performance: Mathematics • Commended Performance: Writing • Commended Performance: Science • Commended Performance: Social Studies • Recommended High School Program • SAT/ACT Results • TAAS/TASP Equivalency
Rounding (Section I)	Calculations for all indicators and all measures were rounded to one decimal point; for example, 79.877% was rounded to 79.9%.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calculations for TAKS and SDAA indicators are rounded to whole numbers. For example, 79.50% is rounded to 80% and 79.49 is rounded to 79%. • Calculations for completion rate, dropout rate and all non-TAKS GPA indicators are rounded to one decimal point: 79.877% is rounded to 79.9%. • Calculations for the student group percents (to determine minimum size) are rounded to whole numbers: 9.877% is rounded to 10%.

REPORTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM

Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS). The AEIS is a comprehensive reporting system defined in state statute. Since 1990-91 campus and district AEIS reports have been generated and published annually for all campuses and districts in the state. Local districts share responsibility for disseminating the AEIS reports including holding hearings for public discussion of the AEIS report content. All indicators used for accountability are reported in

the AEIS, with additional disaggregations to show how each grade level and different populations performed. Indicators that may potentially be used in future accountability ratings are also published in the AEIS. In 2003-04 these include performance on the *Reading Proficiency Tests in English* (RPTE), TAKS performance at the *Panel Recommendation* student passing standard, and TAKS performance at the *Commended* level. The reports also show participation rates on the TAKS tests. Additionally, the AEIS reports demographic information about students and staff, program information, and financial information, all of which provides context for interpreting accountability results.

School Report Card (SRC). Also required by state statute, this agency-generated report provides a subset of the information found on the AEIS report and is produced at the campus level only. Campuses must provide the SRC to each student's family.

Snapshot: School District Profiles. This TEA publication provides an overview of public education in Texas. In addition to a state-level discussion, this publication contains information for each public school district.

Pocket Edition. This brochure provides a quick overview of state-level statistics on students, their performance, campus and district ratings, personnel, and finances.

Report Online. All reports are available on the agency website through the Division of Performance Reporting homepage at: <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/index.html>.

Adequate Yearly Progress. AYP is a program mandated under the federal NCLB Act. Ratings labels for the state accountability system also show whether or not a district or campus met AYP. For more information on similarities and differences between AYP and the state accountability system, see *Section VII – AYP and the Accountability System*.

